

Church Council
First Congregational Church, Portland
July 18, 2023

Attending: Reverend Brigitta Remole, Christina Hellums, Bruce Bishop, Paris Hancock, Nanci Tangeman, Paul Adcock, Bill Cunitz, Margaret Baldwin, Frank Baldwin, Phil Owen, Julie Blanchard, Lindsay Fulmer

- I. Reverend Brigitta Remole opened the meeting with a prayer at 7:00**
- II. June's Minutes:** Approved with one abstention
- III. Church Profile – Frank Baldwin**
 - Council members read the profile before the meeting. Frank and other committee members walked us through the profile and some relevant points.
 - The Church Profile committee is made up of Frank Baldwin (chair), Lindsay Fulmer, Bruce Bishop, Bill Cunitz, Julie Blanchard, Phil Owen.
 - Four non-committee readers reviewed the draft: Ann Laskey, Bunny Oliver, Al Horn and Margaret Baldwin. Writing was a lot more than just rewriting the old profile. They incorporated information from retreats and congregational meetings. Had to add the hybrid worship information and George Floyd protests response.
 - Size of membership calculation on page 14 – Based on membership directory and institutional knowledge of Julie.
 - Used the title “pastor” for the open position throughout the profile. Used the word “collaboration” a lot in the profile to reflect what we want in a pastor.
 - 11-Year Report was out-of-date from conference records, so it was completely updated with Frank and Bruce's input. Some of the membership and financial numbers didn't match annual reports. This new report is a realistic snapshot of our church, if not completely up to date. Some numbers were estimated, due to changes in our church office and different levels of dedication to administration over the years.

Comments from discussion:

- Paris – Add Claremont School?
- Brigitta – What have we learned about ministers with three leaving?
- Bruce – Eric only served as minister for about 13 months, not his whole 18 months tenure. Could we note that somehow?
- Christina – Number of clergy doesn't match on pages 10 and 20.
- Paris – Add support to the Pastoral Committee.
- Phil – Add Secretary to Treasurer title.
- Lindsay – Portico response was a good example of how a Council decision, congregational input, creativity and community response all came together in a quick response.

- Bill – Frank and Bruce should meet with Search Committee to explain the 11-Year Report. The report does not reflect income from the City. This would help Search Committee interpret the report and numbers for candidates.
- Brigitta – Does profile formatting allow comments to address that income? [Frank: It is reflected in other financials in the profile.]
- Frank – The denomination should have some feedback about the report format. Should be a project for the conference.
- Brigitta – Keep the mention of family connections, youth programs, etc. general. Don't lock in additional staffing, programs, etc. Bruce – This is a huge discussion.
- Brigitta – Intergenerational worship happens monthly.
- Frank – Called to Care: 6 people currently involved.
- Christina – Add book discussions, Bienvenidos Quilts, etc. to adult groups? A: Listed are lay leaders, not group names. Take off Eve's Circle.
- Frank - Listing of staff doesn't list choir members, etc. Need to look at it again. Is this only people who are paid?
- Bruce – Finances are budgeted figures.
- Christina – ADA accessibility: Is the elevator in Madison hall rated for use by wheelchairs? [Brigitta – It is signed that it has wheelchair capacity.]
- Christina – Why isn't Donna Faith Eldridge (?) included in the 30-year past ministers. Charles Swensen (?). Robert _____ (?)
- Frank – Mission Insite report: Used data from the report because it covers up to 2028 instead of re-analyzing the data.
- References received, so far: Pat Ross, Rabbi Brian, Jim Sikkell. More coming from Greg McMahon, Bill Crane and Linda Jaramillo.

Bruce: Moved to authorize Paris to sign the profile. Paris seconded. Motion approved.

Giant thank you to the committee.

Lindsay concluded this part of the meeting with a beautiful prayer to be included in the profile.

IV: Minister's Report

- Update on Zoom: Continue to have Council hosts. Announce each week from pulpit.
- ONA: Update for statement. [Paul: Updated to include transgender people sometime during Pat Ross' tenure.] Might even need more updating.
- UCC National Synod voted a new president and general minister: Karen Georgia Thompson, the first female of color to lead the Synod. Should we offer our church for installation? **Yes** from Council. Bandwidth? Help from conference and other churches would be expected.
- Brigitta's daughter will be moving to Vancouver, WA!

V. Business Manager's Report (submitted in writing)

I wish to cover three areas this month:

FACILITIES

- Sewer Compliance. We have submitted necessary information to the City of Portland for a final assessment if we can meet code with a "gravity-feed" connection and avoid the installation of a pumping station. The Environmental Services engineers are calculating this option.
- Fire Panel. The fire panel that controls the suppression and reporting for the basement is beyond repair. Ian was working on a solution. This has now been handed to Steve Eggers, interim Facility Manager

TECHNOLOGY

- Years ago, we installed two column speakers in the sanctuary. The one to stage left has died. The unit is no longer manufactured and parts to repair are not available. The unit stage right is operating, but, again, should anything happen, this unit will not be able to be repaired.
- I have received "ballpark" estimates from SmartTech, our equipment vendor. The best case scenario that will give us a superior "in-house" experience will be approximately \$20,000.
- Given the cost, and in discussion with Pastor and Bruce Bishop, my suggestion is to not pursue replacement at this time. The speaker system being used currently will be available to us (at no cost) until the fall, or later. When I am given a timeframe when this system will no longer be available, I will meet with Pastor, Bruce, and Paris to discuss options.
- We are 98% complete on having a "mirrored" system for use in the Fellowship Hall for 2nd Sunday and other events.

STAFFING

- The sudden departure of Ian Rucker, facilities manager, added stress to the staffing demands, but, thanks to Pastor's leadership, we seem to be close to a solution.
- Steve Eggers has agreed to step back in as our Facilities Manager on a permanent basis. Each time Steve has been with us, it was with the understanding his tenure would be limited. Steve is ready to commit to be with us on a permanent basis.
- A draft offer was presented to Pastor, and with her approval, was sent to Ted Heid, chair of the Personnel Team for final review and approval. As the writing of this report, I do not have final Personnel Approval, but I do not expect any significant hurdles. Once approved, Steve will sign, and be fully onboard. Until then, he is acting as "Interim Facilities Manager".

- Thea Klucznick will be leaving us at the end of July. In anticipation, and to provide adequate coverage and a more consistent execution of regular custodial duties, Pastor approved hiring Derek Eudaly as Lead Custodian. Derek will be with us each Sunday and Wednesday. He will also be “on call” for events and other days as needed. The goal is turn all major custodial duties over to him so that we avoid the cost of outside cleaning services.
- Pastor and I agree that when we have events, we should bring in a professional service to help bring everything back up to standard as quickly as possible. We have identified a vendor with which we are comfortable and this vendor agrees to be available for our events.

VI. Treasurer’s Report

This report was submitted to the minutes in writing. Some points were discussed in the meeting. The rest is included here.

1. Today, we received notice that the 2023 Brown Grant funds have been deposited in our checking account at US Bank in the amount of \$125,295.82. This is approximately \$7,000 more than was budgeted as income from these funds. About 90 percent of this amount will be transferred to our checking account at OnPoint Credit Union. The remainder will stay at US Bank to cover payroll and other automatic payments tied to the US Bank account, until Keith and Andre are able to shift those arrangements to OnPoint.

Bill moved that we use the extra \$7,000 funds from the Brown Grant be used for Search Committee expenses. Phil seconded. Motion passed.

2. Financial Reports—Income and Expense Budget Performance

Our Giving income (line 4000) remains positive, but pledge income fell short in June by about 40 percent. While this is worrisome, it’s not clear what the reason is. It’s possible that it was an accounting anomaly that, due to the 4th of July holiday, June receipts didn’t get recorded until July. It’s also possible that some pledges were recorded at General Gifts. We will have a clearer idea next month.

Contribution reports and letters going out tomorrow.

The Grubaugh bequest of \$40,000 shows separately in Line 4053 for memorials and gifts, but the summary report lumps it into the Giving category.

The other major discrepancies between budget and expenditures include high natural gas expenses, which have been addressed, and ArtReach. Currently, the gallery has approximately \$2,700 in funds available and likely more expenses than that are expected for the remainder of the year. Rev. Brigitta is discussing gallery plans with Sheldon Hurst as he winds down his role as curator.

3. The FOC recommends that the Council decide soon how the Stewardship Campaign will be conducted in 2023.

4. The FOC recommends that \$5,000 be earmarked from the unexpected funds received from the Brown Funds for the Search Committee. In addition, the committee recommends that \$1,000 in Brown Funds be earmarked for the Church Building Fund to cover some of the costs unanticipated with our gas leak and other building issues. This action was changed. See discussion above.

5. The FOC has approved Keith's request that he be added as an authorized check signer in an amount not to exceed \$2,000, the same limit he has on his church credit card.

6. The deposit for Blaine Harden to be our Oliver Lecturer has been paid. The 150 books purchased as part of the lecture agreement are expected this week and will be available for purchase by church members for \$14.88 each. The administrative details for handling these transactions are being addressed tomorrow at the first meeting of the steering committee (comprised of Brigitta, Keith, Frank, and myself, with Nanci Tangeman joining us for the meeting).

Both the Oregon Historical Society and the Umatilla Tribal Museum have agreed to be sponsors of the lecture. The museum director has also agreed to introduce Mr. Harden.

VII. Moderator's Report

- Trudy Bradley's son's graduation announced
- Sister church in Germany moving along with ideas.
- Thea leaving end of July. Bienvenidos will be recognizing her, possibly during July 30 worship.
- Paris leaving on trip soon.
- Search Team having two meetings to interview former search team members.

VIII. Old Business

AED/CPR Training: Possible date is September 10. Since this is a second Sunday, we will look at other dates.

IX. New Business

- **None!**

X. Adjournment and sending prayer

Adjourned at 9:13pm

Minutes: Nanci Tangeman